

R/F. BORDEN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
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THE DURHAM SCHOOL

Compiled by
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On May 11, 1892, according to the records of the County Clerk's office in Gail, Texas, an order to establish the Durham School District was given, creating District No. 3 in which the Durham School was located.

On May 12, 1892, an election was held with the following being elected trustees of the school: T. D. Love, H. N. Haile, and J. S. York. In 1897, J. W. Groves and Wave Coates were appointed trustees.

In 1906, Mr. J. L. Waskom and Mr. Joe H. Wicker, father of Mrs. George (Helen Jo) Gray, built the first school house, locating it just east and slightly north of the old Joe Wicker ranch home, near a spring. This school was taught by governesses, Miss Marcia Waskom and Miss Kate Grigsby, each teaching only one term. Their salaries were paid by Mr. Waskom and Mr. Wicker.

When our family, the A. J. Cantrells', moved to Durham, November, 1908, the school had been in session two months with Mrs. Emma Yeager as teacher. She taught September 1908-1909; and September, 1909-1910.

This one-room building had one door and four windows, with crude door-like shutters. The furniture was crude also, all of it being handmade, consisting of slatted seats, but no desks. There was a rough hewn table for the teacher, along with a cane-bottom chair. There was only one blackboard, extending across one end of the building, made from flooring lumber and painted black. The cracks between these boards served as lines for the students, upon which to write.

Water had to be carried by hand in big tin buckets from the spring, a distance of approximately four or five blocks. No one dared to dip out more water than he could drink. Later a large wooden barrel served as our water fountain, with a dipper attached.

In the spring of 1910 a new school house was built nearer the center of the community. It boasted a beautiful coat of white paint, red roof, and heavy screens. This was also a one-room building, but much larger, with five windows, two doors and an open-faced corner cabinet for lunch pails. In the center of the room stood a big "pot-bellied" coal burning stove. The long slatted benches were placed in front and on either side of the stove where boys and girls could sit and warm their feet, dry wet or snowy shoes - often burning or scorching shoe leather. In this building we enjoyed brand-new factory made seats and desks, both single and double. We were all proud of the teacher's new desk and chair, as well as a long recitation bench, and two nice long, green chalkboards, smooth and easy to write upon.

Cleaning day came each Friday afternoon after school for the next week. Each of the larger pupils enjoyed helping sweep, dust, and clean erasers - putting out new chalk - a job which we all enjoyed. Monitors passed wraps and hoods, which prevented confusion, loss of time and noise, before and after passing in from play. As we were seated after play periods, a monitor passed a big bucket of water down the aisles, and each pupil used his individual collapsible drinking cup.

After recess on Friday afternoons there were spelling, arithmetic, and geography matches, all of which were not only educational drills, but which afforded much enjoyment for parents and pupils alike. Parents frequently visited these activities to see for themselves the skillfulness of their children.

Miss Belle York followed Mrs. Yeager, serving only through the fall term of 1910. Miss Nellie Dietz of Fluvanna finished out that term and taught through the Spring of 1912. She was followed by Miss May Wilson of Vernon, Texas - 1912-1912. Miss Ethel Pritchett of Colorado City succeeded Miss Wilson for one term, 1912-1914.

Miss Annie Wood of Cisco became our teacher in September, 1913, following through until the end of the Spring of 1918. Miss Annie was a naturally gifted and dedicated teacher, who loved boys and girls, understanding their problems and was very capable in helping them with any problem that arose from time to time. It was no problem to learn - - studying and learning with her as our guide and beloved teacher was a pleasure. Many good and wonderful things have grown out of her marvelous teachings. Her fine Christian character, which presented such an influence for good, set her apart from

many other teachers. Her influence was keenly felt and has been manifested over the years in all the lives of her former students. As long as I shall live, I cannot forget her - not only as my teacher but as a beloved friend.

Miss Vada Murphy followed Miss Annie Wood during the term of 1918-1919; Miss Josie York, 1919-1920; Helen Jo Wicker, 1920-21-22; Miss Bertie Mae Baber, 1922-23; Miss Flossie Everett, 1923-24; Miss Forrest Wicker, 1924-25; 25-26; Miss Helen Jo Wicker, 1926-27; and Forrest Wicker, 1927, 1928 and 1929.

The picture below is of Durham School and students, 1908-1909. Reading from left to right, beginning with the top row:

Carl H. Mangum, Mack Waskom, Bennie Waskom, Guy Willis, Effie Mangum Ikard, Helen Keiser Gill, Mamie Keiser Baxter Smith, Mrs. Emma Yeager, Teacher, Martile Waskom Newcomb, Jewel L. Cantrell, Jim Herron, Brother to Jim Herron.

Second Row

Gervaise Yeager Thomas, Lillie Cantrell Harris, Bernard Greenhill, Canolia Fudge, Katie Herron, Mattie Herron, Braden Keiser, Alfred S. Mangum.

Third Row

Vesta Treadway, Faye Mangum Marshall, Thelma Mangum Farmer, Gertrude Greenhill, Connie Waskom, Grace N. Cantrell Anderson, DeAlva Mangum Spear, Forrest Wicker Jones, and Helen Jo Wicker Gray.



In Conclusion:

Music touches every key of memory,
And stirs all the hidden springs of sorrow and of joy;
We love it for what it makes us forget,
And for what it makes us remember,
Memory sheds gladness o'er the past.

THE BORDEN COUNTY MUSEUM will be open on Thursday afternoons - only - during the winter months. If you wish a special tour, please contact Pauline Clark, chairman of the Museum. Many of our Borden youth have visited the Museum, along with many interested adults.

If you wish a copy of "A Drive Up Trail" by Ophelia Dorward, please mail a contribution to the Museum, c/o Pauline Clark, Gail, Texas, 79738.

Mrs. Bertha Wilbourn McKinney, daughter of the Wilbourn who gave the section of land for the town of Gail, visited the Museum 10/7/66.

MEMORIALS: Mr. and Mrs. Jim Burkett have given a donation to the Historical Society in memory of MRS. COLLIE ANNIE STEPHENS, mother of John and Bill Stephens.

WHOSE BOOTS?

By Dorothy Dennis

Sam Blackburn wrote an article in the Big Spring Daily Herald October 24, 1965 concerning some 90-year old boots, believed to have belonged to a Ft. Concho Cavalryman. These boots are in the possession of The Christensen Boot Shop and were given to Mrs. Christensen's grandfather by an early day Borden County ranchman (his name has been forgotten).

The boots are of rawhide, cut in the simplest form, handsewn and have the soles and heels fastened with wooden pegs. There is a possibility that the boots could have been made by Mr. Christensen's grandfather, as he was a boot-maker around Ft. Concho about the time the boots were made.

This story spurred my interest in trying to find out how the boots could have been left in Borden County and I came up with some mighty interesting tales--all factual.

Fort Concho was established in 1867 at the site of present day San Angelo. The Plains country was a favorite hunting ground for Comanches as the pioneers hadn't ventured into this vast area of level ground, sand and little water. For many decades the Comancheros, or Comanche traders of New Mexico, had been busy trading profitably with the Plains Indians in cattle and horses. The Llano Estacado was their favorite meeting place. The Ft. Concho Cavalrymen had been ordered to clean up the last of these Indian tribes.

The first account I found was that of a skirmish between these Cavalrymen led by a Sgt. W. Wilson and the Comancheros in March, 1872. There was a brisk fight near Mucha Que, with the result that 2 Comancheros were killed, 3 wounded and 1 was captured.

On December 3, 1874, Col. Ranald Mackenzie was returning to Ft. Concho from a severe November spent on the Plains hunting Indians. He headed south by Yellowhouse and Tahoka Lake, down by Mucha Que, where he had a few skirmishes with a small band of Indians.

On October 12, 1875, Col. Shafter moved with six companies of cavalry and two of infantry to the headwaters of Yellowhouse Canyon - here he detached Capt. Baldwin to go south by way of Tahoka Lake and Mucha Que in search of roving Indians.

On July 4, 1877, Lt. Nicholas Nolan was ordered out of Concho with Company A of the 10th Colored Cavalry. Nolan had led his men north to the Colorado and set up a supply camp on Bull Creek, 7 miles northeast of Mucha Que. Here he left a sergeant and 19 negroes to guard the camp. Then with 40 cavalrymen and 22 buffalo hunters who had joined them, they pulled out on July 19, 1877 - they camped 15 miles away on Tobacco Creek. While at this spot, Quanah Parker with a band of Comanches, rode into camp but produced a pass from the Indian Agent at Ft. Sill, countersigned by Col. Mackenzie, authorizing Quanah's trip to Texas for the purpose of bringing back Indians who had left the reservations. Nolan hated to let the elusive Quanah out of his sight but he could do nothing to stop him. The Cavalrymen pulled out next morning for an expedition that was to prove quite costly. In their search for Indians, they became lost and wandered around looking for the Double Lakes (near Tahoka) - the men went without water and food for 86 hours. This experience is one of the most horrifying recorded - in their wanderings, the men killed and drank the blood from 22 of their horses. 5 men died and the others suffered pitifully. On August 5, Nolan gathered together what was left of his men and headed back to the supply camp on Bull Creek. This episode in history is now referred to as "Nolan's Lost Nigger Expedition".

There is no doubt that the boots belonged to a Ft. Concho Cavalryman engaged in one of the above forays. However, we will have to draw upon our imagination as to what befell the owner.

If you wish to read further concerning these expeditions, please ask for the following at your local libraries:

FT. CONCHO by J. Evetts Haley

THE BORDER AND THE BUFFALO by John R. Cook

ON THE BORDER WITH MACKENZIE by R. G. Carter

RANALD SIDELL MACKENZIE by Dr. Ernest Wallace

REBECCA LOCKLEAR, wife of Dee Locklear, died August 12, 1966 and was buried in Fort Sumner, New Mexico. Mrs. Locklear was not a resident of Borden County but Dee came here in 1893 and ranched just north of the 9R. He left in 1903.

LETITIA HOOD SMOOT died November 23, 1966 and was buried in San Angelo. She was a sister of Mrs. Billy Askins.

PAUL CLARK CHILDERS of Houston died Oct. 3, 1965. He was born in 1907 in Gail, attended SMU and University of Houston, where he received his law degree. His parents were the late Mr. and Mrs. James W. Childers.

REPORT OF TEXAS STATE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION AND TEXAS STATE
HISTORICAL SURVEY COMMITTEE ANNUAL MEETING
By Edna Miller

Borden County Historical Survey Committee has been represented at each of the Texas State Historical Survey Committee and Texas Historical Foundation Annual meetings since it became an active committee in 1964.

A scrap book and newsletters covering our activities for those years were on display at the 1966 Annual meeting held at Green Oaks Inn in Ft. Worth, Dec. 1-2-3. Frank and Edna Miller were your representatives and were accompanied by Mrs. Witt Hines, Chairman from Mitchell County.

Mitchell, Garza, Scurry, and Crosby Counties were all Distinguished Award winners and "Quota Buster Counties", which means they have contributed at least \$200 to the Foundation. The Foundation furnishes much of the funds, does research, and in general supports the work of the County survey committees. We hope many of our readers will give support to this important work - individual memberships are available for \$5.00 per year.

I wish I had more space to tell you in detail of the interesting, informative, and entertaining program in Ft. Worth. John Ben Shepperd, who has been largely responsible for the success of the program for the Historical Survey Committee and the adoption of this program in almost every county in the state, was elected President of the Historical Foundation.

Secretary of the Interior, Stewart Udall, was the special guest speaker at the banquet and commended the Survey Committee and the Foundation for their outstanding efforts and Texas for being the only state having such a program in operation. Secretary Udall was honored for having been instrumental in helping establish the Alibates National Monument near Borger, the Padre Island National Park and for restoring old Fort Davis.

Many friends and neighbors took part in the program and were the recipients of special awards - they were: Mrs. Wayne Boren of Snyder; Mrs. Witt Hines of Colorado City; Mrs. McKinley and Mrs. Phillips of Midland; Mrs. Harvey of Crosbyton; and Mrs. Surman of Post. Your Borden County chairman gave a ten-minute talk on our 75th Anniversary celebration and told of our accomplishments, our aims and goals for the future.

Despite the failure of the weather to cooperate, we had a wonderful weekend. I felt very honored, as chairman from Borden County, to be a part of such an outstanding group of people who are really getting things done. I feel that Borden County has accomplished a great deal in these two years and that we will have an even more impressive report of work done in 1967 - - - and with your full cooperation WE CAN!

We want to thank everyone who has written to say you enjoy the newsletter. We need your continued moral and financial support - but in order to continue this publication, we must have more interest, especially from Borden County residents! If you wish your name kept on the mailing list, please send your \$3.00 to The Borden County Historical Society, Gail, Texas 79738.

We need more family histories, detailed accounts of your life spent in Borden County, pictures etc.

If you wish to make a donation to the Museum in memory of someone, please send it to Pauline Clark, Gail, Texas 79738.

MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR

From: The Borden County Historical Society
Gail, Texas 79738

TO:

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